

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of making a nonwoven fabric for buffing applications, comprising the steps of:

providing a precursor web comprising polyester staple length fibers;

5 providing a foraminous, three-dimensional image transfer device having an array of three-dimensional surface elements;

positioning said precursor web on said image transfer device, and hydroentangling said precursor web to form an imaged nonwoven fabric, and

10 applying a polymeric binder composition to said imaged nonwoven fabric to provide said fabric with a Combined Tensile Strength of at least about 800 grams/ounce of fabric.

2. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 1, including:

15 pre-entangling said precursor web on a foraminous forming surface prior to said step of hydroentangling said precursor web on said image transfer device.

3. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said imaged nonwoven fabric has a Taber Abrasion of at least about 1000 cycles after application of said binder composition.

20 4. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

said binder composition comprises a melamine polymeric compound.

5. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

25 said step of hydroentangling said precursor web on said image transfer device includes forming a pattern of surface irregularities in the nonwoven fabric formed thereby.

6. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 5, wherein:

30 said pattern of surface irregularities include apertures.

7. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 5, wherein:

said pattern of surface irregularities include raised portions.

8. A method of making a nonwoven fabric for buffing applications, comprising the steps of:

providing a precursor web comprising polyester staple length fibers; pre-entangling said precursor web on a foraminous forming surface;

providing a three-dimensional image transfer device having an array of three-dimensional surface elements;

positioning said precursor web on said image transfer device, and hydroentangling said precursor web to form an imaged nonwoven fabric having a pattern of apertures therein; and

applying a polymeric binder composition to said imaged fabric, said binder composition comprising a melamine polymeric compound, said resultant fabric having combined tensile strength of at least about 800 grams/ounce of fabric.

9. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 8, wherein:

said nonwoven fabric has a Taber Abrasion of at least about 1000 cycles after application of said binder composition.

10. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 8, wherein:

said step of providing said three-dimensional image transfer device includes providing said image transfer device with an array of three-dimensional surface elements having an octagon-and-square configuration.

11. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 8, wherein:

said step of providing said three-dimensional image transfer device includes providing said image transfer device with an array of three-dimensional surface elements having a herringbone configuration.

12. A method of making a nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 8, wherein:

said step of applying said binder composition includes applying a binder composition further comprising an acrylic/copolymer composition.

5 13. A nonwoven fabric for buffing applications formed in accordance with the method of claim 8.

14. A nonwoven fabric for buffing applications comprising:
an imaged, apertured fibrous matrix comprising polyester staple length fibers, and a polymeric binder,

10 said nonwoven fabric having a combined tensile strength of at least about 800 grams/ounce of fabric, and a Taber Abrasion of at least about 1000 cycles.

15. A nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 14, wherein:
said binder composition comprises a melamine composition.

15 16. A nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 15, wherein:
said binder composition further comprises an acrylic/copolymer composition.

17. A nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 14, wherein:
said fabric has an image imparted thereto by a three-dimensional image transfer device having an array of three-dimensional surface elements having an octagon-and-square configuration.

20 18. A nonwoven fabric in accordance with claim 14, wherein:
said fabric has an image imparted thereto by a three-dimensional image transfer device having an array of three-dimensional surface elements having a herringbone configuration.

25 19. A nonwoven fabric for buffing applications comprising:
a fibrous matrix comprising staple length fibers,
said fibrous matrix being hydroentangled into a nonwoven fabric,
said nonwoven fabric has an image imparted thereto by a three-
dimensional image transfer device having an array of three-dimensional surface
30 elements,

said image imparting the ability of the nonwoven fabric to retain compounds applied thereto.